



Sanctuary Collaborates with International Partners

Joanne Delaney, FKNMS Research Interpreter

The Florida Keys island chain may seem small to those of us that live here, but in the eyes of international visitors, a trip to the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is big business. As the second largest National Marine Sanctuary in the United States and one of the most complex marine protected areas (MPA) in the world, the Sanctuary regularly draws the attention of international marine managers and their staff who are seeking lessons and examples to apply to their own experiences back home. And as we've learned time and time again, the Sanctuary has much wisdom to gain from the experiences of these foreign guests.



After a day in the field, Pat Wells, Florida Park Service Manager (far right), poses next to Marion Howard, Coralina Project Coordinator, and other staff members from the Coralina Marine Reserve of Colombia.

Since 1999, the Sanctuary has organized and hosted more than twelve groups of international visitors to the Keys. These groups have varied widely in their number, nationality, and responsibility in the marine affairs of their country. Representatives from the Mafia Island Marine Park in Tanzania, Galapagos Marine Reserve, Italian National Park System, KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation Service in South Africa, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in Australia, Coralina Marine Protected Area Program in Colombia, Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, and Sanya Coral Reef Reserve in China have taken part in training programs at the Sanctuary. We have been fortunate enough to share our experiences with high ranking international officials such as Dr. Rokhmin Dahuri, Director General of the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Exploration and Fisheries, Mr. Jassim Al-Qaseer, Director of Fisheries in Bahrain, and Dr. Jennie Cary, Senior Marine Ecologist with the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Interest in the FKNMS from the international community can largely be attributed to the diversity of management strategies employed at our Sanctuary. Education and outreach, enforcement, mooring buoys, research and monitoring, volunteer programs, and marine zoning are all tangible tools that can be applied effectively in most marine settings. Hands-on observation and participation in these and other Sanctuary programs offer many marine conservation groups a valuable training experience. And highly skilled Sanctuary staff members are quick to offer their time and assistance to support these important visitors. Marion Wiles Howard, Coralina Project Coordinator for Marine Protected Areas in the San Andreas Archipelago of Colombia, recently visited the FKNMS with her staff. "The special program tailored to our needs balanced presentations, discussions, and practical field training, with plenty of time and opportunity to share information. The enthusiasm of the FKNMS staff was matched only by our team's excitement!" she explains.

In addition to experiences at the Sanctuary, the Florida Keys provide the opportunity for international guests to interact with the many other important agencies, programs, and environmental organizations that work in marine resource protection. The Sanctuary routinely collaborates with the Dry Tortugas, Everglades, and Biscayne National Parks, National Undersea Research Center, FWC/Florida Marine Research Institute, John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Mote Marine Laboratory, The Nature Conservancy, The Ocean Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund to share knowledge and information with foreign visitors.

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Through their diverse experiences at the Sanctuary and in the Florida Keys, directors and staff of marine conservation programs worldwide have brought lessons from our corner of the globe to their activities at home. "Our experience at FKNMS was invaluable. We are in the process of developing a system of four large marine protected areas in our archipelago, but our project team had never visited a functioning MPA. We were particularly eager for them to train at FKNMS because we are basing our multiple use MPAs on the FKNMS model," said Howard. Sanctuary staff gain tremendous insight and skills during these visits as well, as many foreign programs have challenges similar to those in the Keys and have developed innovative ways to address them. In some instances, collaboration with international partners continues beyond the initial FKNMS visit to offer reciprocal staff training. Such programs are currently ongoing in South China with the Sanya Coral Reef Reserve and the proposed Weizhou Island Coral Reef Reserve. Similar exchanges with Coralina in San Andreas, Colombia and the Red Sea Protectorates in Egypt are also being explored. Contributing the experiences of this small island community to the international marine conservation world is an exciting part of our work here at the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Joanne Delaney--Biography

Joanne Delaney is a Research Interpreter for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, where she explains scientific information related to current marine issues to a variety of audiences through articles, presentations, and papers. Joanne brought her background in marine science, management, and education to the Sanctuary in 1997.

Note: This article appeared in the Winter 2001 issue of the newsletter of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, **Sounding Line**. For information, visit: floridakeys.noaa.gov.

Web Resources about International Issues

The Coral Reef Alliance <http://www.coralreefalliance.org/press/colombia2.html>

Biosphere Reserve Location Map Columbia

<http://www2.unesco.org/mab/br/brdir/latin-am/Colombiamap.htm>

Hawaiian Marine Protected Areas <http://www.coralreefnetwork.com/mpa/>

International Coral Reef Initiative <http://www.icriforum.org/>

NOAA's Coral Reef Activities <http://www.coris.noaa.gov/activities/impacts/impacts.html>

Northwest Hawaiian Islands Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve <http://hawaiiireef.noaa.gov/welcome.html>

Status of Coral Reefs of the World <http://www.reefbase.org/pdf/scr2002-00.pdf>

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) & The World Conservation Union Socioeconomic Manual for Coral Reef Management <http://iucn.org/themes/wcpa/biome/marine/socioecon.htm>